

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-23 (Cancelled).

24. (Currently Amended) A method of connecting refrigerant pipes of a multi-unit type air conditioner, the method comprising the steps of:

preparing a branch pipe joint body having a hollow shape and a plurality of communication ports each having the same inner diameter;

selecting connecting pipes from a group of connecting pipes at an installation site of the multi-unit type air conditioner, each of the selected connecting pipes having one end portion having an outer diameter enabling the one end portion to be fitted to said communication ports and another end portion having an inner diameter enabling the another end portion to be fitted to one of the plurality of the refrigerant pipes having different outer diameters, said group of connecting pipes and said branch pipe joint body having been packed in one package; and

connecting said branch pipe joint body to said refrigerant pipes through the selected connecting pipes using firm fixing,

wherein the number of said connecting pipes in said group of connecting pipes is larger than the number of said communication ports, and is set such that each of a number of connecting pipes having a minimum inner diameter and a number of the connecting pipes having a maximum inner diameter are a total number of the connecting pipes having a minimum inner diameter and a maximum inner diameter is smaller than a number of the

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connecting pipes having [[an]] inner diameters other than the minimum and maximum inner diameters,

and wherein some of said communication ports are directly firmly fixed to some of said refrigerant pipes without using the connecting pipes.

25-28. (Cancelled).
